



USAID | **SUDAN**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Training Gives Activists Unique Tool for Confronting Social Injustice



Workshop participants discuss the causes and consequences of various forms of discrimination.

One woman commented that the training raised her level of sensitivity: “Now I will be careful not to fall into the trap of the discriminator, by looking inwardly and watching my thoughts and actions.”

October 2008 – Discrimination in any form leads to social exclusion, and since the signing Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, grassroots organizations in Sudan have seized on the opportunity to reverse the prevailing culture of war—which tends to cement biases and give rise to further discrimination. However, many of these organizations remain hindered by a lack technical capacity and resources.

To confront the issues of discrimination and exclusion, USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) collaborated with a local nongovernmental organization to share a unique evaluative methodology with 80 civil society leaders in the capital of Khartoum. Known as social exclusion analysis, the tool helps identify the root causes of exclusion so individuals and organizations can develop strategies to advocate for a more inclusive and

just society.

During a series of workshops, participants examined how their attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices are influenced by a set of socio-cultural, economic, political, and historical dynamics that often reinforce social exclusion. The facilitator artfully used group discussions, exercises, and simulations to reveal the participants’ attitudes toward factors of diversity, such as ethnicity, class, gender, and religion.

During one exercise, the attendees were asked to identify and analyze instances where they had discriminated. Even for open-minded community activists, such self-revelations proved uncomfortable, but the exercise helped them come face to face with their own levels of tolerance for discrimination.

The response to the workshops was overwhelmingly positive, and the facilitator selected a smaller group to receive advanced training on sharing the methodology. One participant said, “I wish we were given this training a year ago—we could have done a lot with it by now.” The workshops’ importance was also echoed in several daily newspapers.

By understanding the causes of social exclusion, individuals and organizations can adjust their mindsets and activities to more effectively fight discrimination. Education, legal advocacy, and the media can all serve as channels to confront social exclusion. By supporting such projects, USAID/OTI aims to strengthen various facets of civil society to advocate for a pluralistic and peaceful Sudan.